

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MAPUTO 000013

SIPDIS

AIDAC

PLEASE PASS USAID FOR AFR/SA, DCHA/OFDA, DCHA/FFP  
ROME FOR FODAG, NAIROBI FOR OFDA/ARO, NSC/WASH DC  
FOR JDWORKEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#)

SUBJECT: USAID/DCHA/OFDA ASSESSMENT VISIT TO  
MOZAMBIQUE

REF: NONE

Summary:

USAID/OFDA Disaster Response and Mitigation Division Director and USAID/OFDA Principal Regional Advisor for Southern Africa visited Mozambique from 10 - 12 December to meet with Embassy and USAID staff, UN agencies, NGO partners, and Government (GRM) disaster management officials to review the drought and food security situation affecting selected provinces in the south and center of the country. The team traveled to Gaza Province to observe food aid distributions and other programs in progress. The GRM developed a Contingency Plan that was put into place in 2002/03 in response to drought conditions, and this plan has been updated for the 2003/04 season to respond to drought, floods, and cyclones, should any, or all, of these occur. The current drought and food security situation, while serious, seems to the OFDA team to be under control through a combination of food aid assistance through UN World Food Program (WFP), supported in large part by USAID Food For Peace (USAID/FFP), relevant UN agencies, a handful of other donors, a group of international and national NGOs, and GRM funds reprogrammed from the regular budget. Given a poor start to the 2003/04 crop season, USAID/Mozambique and USAID/OFDA will continue to monitor the situation to determine if additional humanitarian assistance, particularly non-food aid, is required. Extended Drought in the South and Center Mozambique is one of the six countries included in the UN's Regional Consolidated Appeal for Southern Africa in response to the complex food security crisis affecting the region. Drought and food insecurity has affected more than 40 districts in the provinces of Maputo, Gaza, and Inhambane in the southern part of the country, and Tete, Manica and Sofala provinces in the central region, resulting in two years of failed crop seasons. In some areas, these conditions followed several significant floods, the largest being in 2000 and 2001, resulting in up to three or four successive years of poor harvests. USAID/FFP was one of the first food aid donors to respond, this noted by GRM officials, and remains a significant contributor to WFP's emergency food aid program. Food aid distributions to drought-affected communities, combined with supplemental feeding to women and children, have largely stabilized the food intake situation, preventing the nutritional status from deteriorating to crisis levels. In anticipation of a near normal 2003/04 crop season, GRM reprogrammed funds from its agricultural development budget to fund the (a) distribution/sale of seeds and agricultural inputs to affected communities through seed fairs; (b) multiplication of drought tolerant improved varieties of cassava and sweet potatoes, and (c) rehabilitation of small scale irrigation sites, linked to treadle pumps.

Contingency Planning for 2003/04

The team attended a presentation chaired by the Foreign Minister and the GRM disaster management office, the Instituto Nacional de Gestao das Calamidades (INGC), where the results of actions taken in 2002/03 were presented and the revised Contingency Plan for 2003/04 was outlined. The Contingency Plan takes account of the three primary natural hazards in Mozambique, droughts, floods, and tropical cyclones, and sets forth actions to be taken in the event that any, or all, of these occur. The GRM's first response will be to realign existing budget resources to provide assistance. Depending on the size and scope of the disaster, the GRM will then look to locally-based UN and NGO partners for assistance, before requesting aid from the international donor community. In the event of a large-scale disaster, or multiple disasters, it is likely that donor resources will be needed to complement GRM funds. The efforts being undertaken by the GRM to plan for recurrent natural disasters are widely appreciated by the UN and donor community

and serve as the basis for further assistance, as required.

#### Mitigation Programs underway

The team traveled to Gaza Province, along with staff from WFP and UNICEF, and were hosted by Samaritan's Purse (SPIR), a U.S. PVO working with drought-affected communities. SPIR serves as an Implementing Partner for WFP and UNICEF managing food distribution activities. Food distribution is largely undertaken through community-identified food-for-work (FFW) programs, and the team visited three activities underway. Under the technical management of the District Department of Agriculture, one community is developing a multiplication/propagation center where improved cassava and sweet potatoes are being intensively grown under irrigation. This center is producing planting materials that will be distributed to neighboring communities, serving to provide a more diverse, and drought-tolerant crop suited to farms in drought prone areas. Additional multiplication/propagation centers are being developed throughout the area. Community labor is compensated through food aid provided by WFP through SPIR.

In response to recurrent flooding, one community was constructing a causeway across a low, swampy area that periodically floods, cutting off their fields from access to the main road and market. Upon completion, this causeway should serve to keep access open during most normal periods of seasonal flooding. The team was impressed with the extent and quality of the construction and the high degree of participation of women in the project. Another FFW project involved the reconstruction of the central town market, destroyed during the 2000 floods. The market is being reconstructed on an elevated foundation that will enable it to remain open during occasional periods of local seasonal flooding.

Poor water quality is an ongoing problem in the region visited, and particularly acute in a period of greatly diminished uncontaminated sources from which to draw, with many people obtaining their water from unprotected wells and rivers. In response to this immediate problem, SPIR is producing and promoting an innovative, low-cost and highly effective bio-sand filtration system designed for home use. The team visited the fabrication facility and was briefed on the design and operation of the system and visited a home where the system was in use. The system is low-cost and can be maintained by the household, and eliminates most of the common contaminants found in surface water. The team felt that this low-cost, high-impact system warranted further study to determine potential for propagation/dissemination and its possible use in other emergency programs.

As water for both consumption and agriculture has proven to be a critical immediate problem for rural families affected by this drought in Mozambique, several NGO partners (World Vision, CARE, SPIR, and Save the Children) are developing plans and seeking funding for a variety of water interventions, including the repair of broken borehole pumps, improvement of shallow wells, small-scale irrigation systems. These interventions, if undertaken, will provide essential potable water that complements food distribution, alleviates the current threat of water-borne intestinal diseases - particularly to young children, and serves to mitigate the impact of future droughts and improve food security and health status in the affected communities.

#### Conclusions

The OFDA team generally felt that the current drought situation, while significant, was under control and being managed well by a combination of GOM, UN, NGO, and donor resources. The food aid program is having significant impact in maintaining the health and nutritional status of drought-affected communities. USAID/Mozambique, related UN agencies and involved NGOs in the field argue that more can and should be done to alleviate suffering, with particular mention of water needs. The current 2003/04 crop season requires ongoing monitoring, as rains during the first half of the season (October - December) have been late and insufficient. Crop stress was observed during the visit, and should the rains continue to be erratic, insufficient, and poorly timed, it is likely that crop production, especially maize, will be significantly reduced. USAID/Mozambique and OFDA Southern Africa Regional Office will monitor of effectiveness of coping strategies and current relief activities. A further assessment of the situation will be necessary if the 2003/04 season is negatively impacted. The sparse

rainfall pattern seen thus far in the growing season is extremely worrisome for several districts that have suffered through complete crop losses for the past three or four years. Further humanitarian assistance - including the need for non-food aid -- is probable unless the drought breaks in the next few weeks.

HANKINS